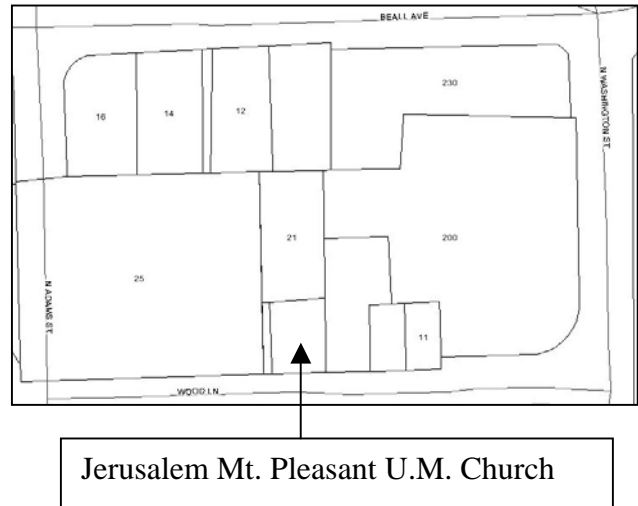


CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
for
October 19, 2006
MEETING NO. 11-06

APPLICATION:	HDC2006-00368
ADDRESS:	21 Wood Lane
ACCEPTED:	September 26, 2006
45 DAY LIMIT:	November 10, 2006
OWNER:	Jerusalem-Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church
REQUEST:	Install elevator in tower and block in existing windows for shaft
STAFF:	Cindy Kebba



Staff recommends approval, given the following findings: Handicapped access to the sanctuary of the church has been identified as a critical problem for many years. Installation of an elevator in the tower of the Church will have the least visual impact on the historic structure compared to other alternatives. Although windows will be blocked from the interior to accomplish this, there will be no exterior modifications to the historic resource.

DRAFT MOTION OF APPROVAL:

Finding HDC2006-00368, for installation of an elevator in the tower of Jerusalem-Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and City of Rockville Technical Guides for Exterior Alterations, as the work will be interior and will not affect the appearance of the structure from the exterior, I move approval of the application with the following condition:

1. Great care must be taken in the removal, storage and re-installation of the windows and door so that they are protected from damage.

BACKGROUND: The applicant requests approval to install an elevator inside the square tower on the southeast corner of the church and relocate and enlarge restrooms on the basement level. Although these are interior alterations, one door and three windows, including two pointed arch stained glass windows (one on the south façade and one on the east), the triangular transom over the door, and one basement window will need to be blocked from the interior with 4-inch thick concrete masonry units (CMUs) to accommodate the elevator shaft and meet code requirements. The windows and door will be reinstalled in their original openings in front of the CMUs.

The church has been struggling with the issue of handicapped accessibility for many years. The congregation includes elderly members who are not able to access the sanctuary because of the very steep stairs. A 1983 letter from Michael Patterson, then Chair of the HDC, to Reverend Moser who was pastor at the church at the time, suggested that a vertical lift be installed in the tower but the church did not have the funds to do this at the time. A ramp was considered in 1996 but it would have to be excessively long because of the height distance from ground level to the sanctuary level on the first floor and no action was taken.

In July 2006, Jerusalem-Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church was awarded a \$79,120 grant for fiscal Year 2007 as part of Maryland's Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program. The award is for the work that is requested in this application, i.e. installation of an elevator in the tower and interior renovations. It was the only project selected in Montgomery County for FY 2007. In addition, the church has had a fundraising campaign to cover costs in excess of the grant.

Previous Requests:

HDC96-0087	Handicapped access ramp, 6/18/96
HDC2003-0285	Demolition of Cordelia House (adjacent structure at 19 Wood Lane owned by the Church)

Property Area: 7,744 square feet

Structure Area: 3,755 s.f. (Basement and first floor are each 1,649 s.f. and balcony is 755 s.f.)

Zone: O-2

Development Standards: The seven adjoining lots that are owned by the church were all rezoned O-2 in 2005 to allow the church to assemble lots for redevelopment. The O-2 zone provides a transition between commercial and residential uses by restricting the size of buildings to a scale that approximates the residential zone on existing smaller lots. There is a maximum 25% lot coverage, minimum setbacks of 15 feet in the front, side and rear and a maximum building height of 35 feet. The work proposed in this application will not affect the development standards as it is interior work and will not expand the building's size.

City of Rockville Permits Required:

HDC Certificate of Approval
Building permits (for elevator shaft)
[The applicant will also require permits from the MD Dept. of Labor and Licenses (for elevator)]

BACKGROUND

Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.

✓ **Contributing**
Non-Contributing

Significance: Rockville was an early center of Methodism in Montgomery County. In 1835, the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church purchased lot 82 of the Original Town of Rockville to erect a place of worship. The Rockville Methodist Episcopal Church incorporated in 1852 and erected a brick house of worship in 1858. In 1845, a doctrinal dispute over slavery caused the Methodist Episcopal Church to separate into two factions, North and South. The southern faction in Rockville left the congregation and built a new church on West Montgomery Avenue in 1868. The old church was left to the North, or non-slavery Methodists, and became a predominantly black congregation. The church, re-named named Jerusalem Methodist Episcopal Church was dismantled and enlarged in 1892. It merged with Mt. Pleasant Methodist Church in 1989.

Background History: The 4-bay by 6-bay church faces south on Wood Lane and is a contributing resource to the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District. It is raised high on its foundation and the front entrance is reached by steep, cascading concrete steps. The front entry is framed by a round-arched opening composed of paired wood paneled doors and a leaded glass, half-round light composed of yellow panes. This door is flanked by two narrow double hung pointed arch windows, each filled with stained glass. There is a centered round stained glass light positioned above the entry.

A square buttressed tower rises from the southeast corner. It was originally topped by a polygonal wood shingled belfry similar to that on the Rockville Christian Church. In 1954, more than \$13,000 was spent on improvements to the church. The brick was covered with white stucco, the belfry was removed from the tower, and the top of the tower was finished by a cap of moulded brick with crenellated corners. The front stairs were enlarged in 1958. There is a single wood paneled door in the pointed arch opening on the first floor of the tower facing south. The basement window on the east façade has a clear glazed, 2 over 2, double-hung window. The east façade matches the west façade as it is composed of three pairs of tall pointed-arch stained glass windows separated by wall buttresses. However the southeast pair of windows is divided because the tower projects. One of the window pair is located in the tower on the east façade. Single small six-paned windows are located near the top of the tower on the south (front), east and south elevations. These were added as part of the 1954 alterations.

VIEWS OF AFFECTED RESOURCES:



South (Main) Facade



SE corner with tower



Tower, viewed from NE



Front door and stained glass window

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:

The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the entire structure and to the surrounding area.

The church sanctuary is not handicapped accessible. A handicap ramp was considered to provide access to the sanctuary from the street level at an HDC courtesy review in June 1996 and options were discussed, but an application was never approved. The ramp would have had to wrap along the west side of the church and would have partially obscured windows on that façade. Rest rooms are only located on the basement level and do not have handicapped facilities.

An elevator inside the existing tower would require no exterior alterations. The windows and door will be removed for safekeeping and re-set in their openings after the shaft is built and the elevator is installed.

Staff asked the architect, Harold Navy, if there could be a way to light the windows from within the tower at night outside of the elevator shaft. Mr. Navy consulted with the contractor and the elevator company and was told that it would not be possible because there would not be a way to provide access to lighting in this area. The applicant notes that the first floor of the tower is presently used as a coat closet and that these windows do not emit light from the church now.

MATERIALS:

The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.

The existing windows will be removed and stored. The openings will be blocked from the interior with 4-inch thick CMUs. The windows will then be re-set into their openings. No replacement materials will be necessary.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

To any other factors, including aesthetic factors, which the Commission deems to be pertinent, including items such as cost, tax credits, options, and alternative plans.

The project has already been granted a \$79,120 tax credit from the State of Maryland. It is interior work and not eligible for the Montgomery County tax credit.

COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES:

Staff finds that the proposed alterations meet the Secretary of the Interior *Standards for Rehabilitation* and the City of Rockville Technical Guides for Exterior Alterations as no historic design elements or materials will be permanently removed or destroyed.

Attachments: Certificate of Approval application, photographs, plans, copy of letter from Gov. Ehrlich granting rehabilitation tax credit.